

20. ORIENTAL TURTLE-DOVE *STREPTOPELIA ORIENTALIS*:  
A NEW SPECIES FOR THE THAR DESERT

While conducting surveys for diurnal raptors near Bikaner, Rajasthan we sighted an Oriental turtle-dove *Streptopelia orientalis* at Kodamdesar near Gajner on October 4, 1999. The bird was observed drinking water at 1715 hrs with about 15 Eurasian collared-dove *Streptopelia decaocto* from a puddle near the village water tank. The bird was immediately distinguishable by its stocky pigeon-like build. Its reddish-brown scaly patterned back, chessboard like spots on each side of the hind neck and dark tail, edged with white, looked quite striking compared to the uniformly plain Eurasian collared-dove.

The species is not listed in the checklist of the birds of the Thar Desert of Rajasthan, which summarises the bird records of three surveys between February 1993 and May 1994 (Rahmani 1997). H.S.S. has been regularly visiting the Thar since 1986, but has never come across this species before (Sangha 2002). This is the first record of the species from the Thar Desert to the best of our knowledge. Ali and Ripley (1981) write that this dove avoids 'semi desert tracts' and give northern and peninsular India as its wintering

range. Grimmett *et al.* (1998) and Kazmierczak (2000) do not mention this area in the distribution of this species.

Although this is the first record for the Thar Desert, it is not unexpected. The development of the Rajasthan Canal (Indira Gandhi Nahar) and its feeder channels in the Thar Desert, have transformed the landscape to a considerable extent. Extensive plantations along the canals, increase in irrigated crop fields, and development of waterbodies due to seepage along the canals has increased the avian diversity in the area and many species that were not recorded earlier have become common.

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21. BREEDING RECORD OF THE SYKES'S NIGHTJAR  
*CAPRIMULGUS MAHRATTENSIS* (SYKES) IN HARIKE, PUNJAB, INDIA

The Sykes's nightjar *Caprimulgus mahrattensis* is listed as a rare resident and winter migrant in India (Grimmett *et al.* 1998). Its breeding in India has been recorded in Kutch

(Abdulali and Hussain 1971), while it is suspected to breed in Punjab, Saurashtra and Rajasthan (Ali and Ripley 1987, Grimmett *et al.* 1998).